

Warning labels

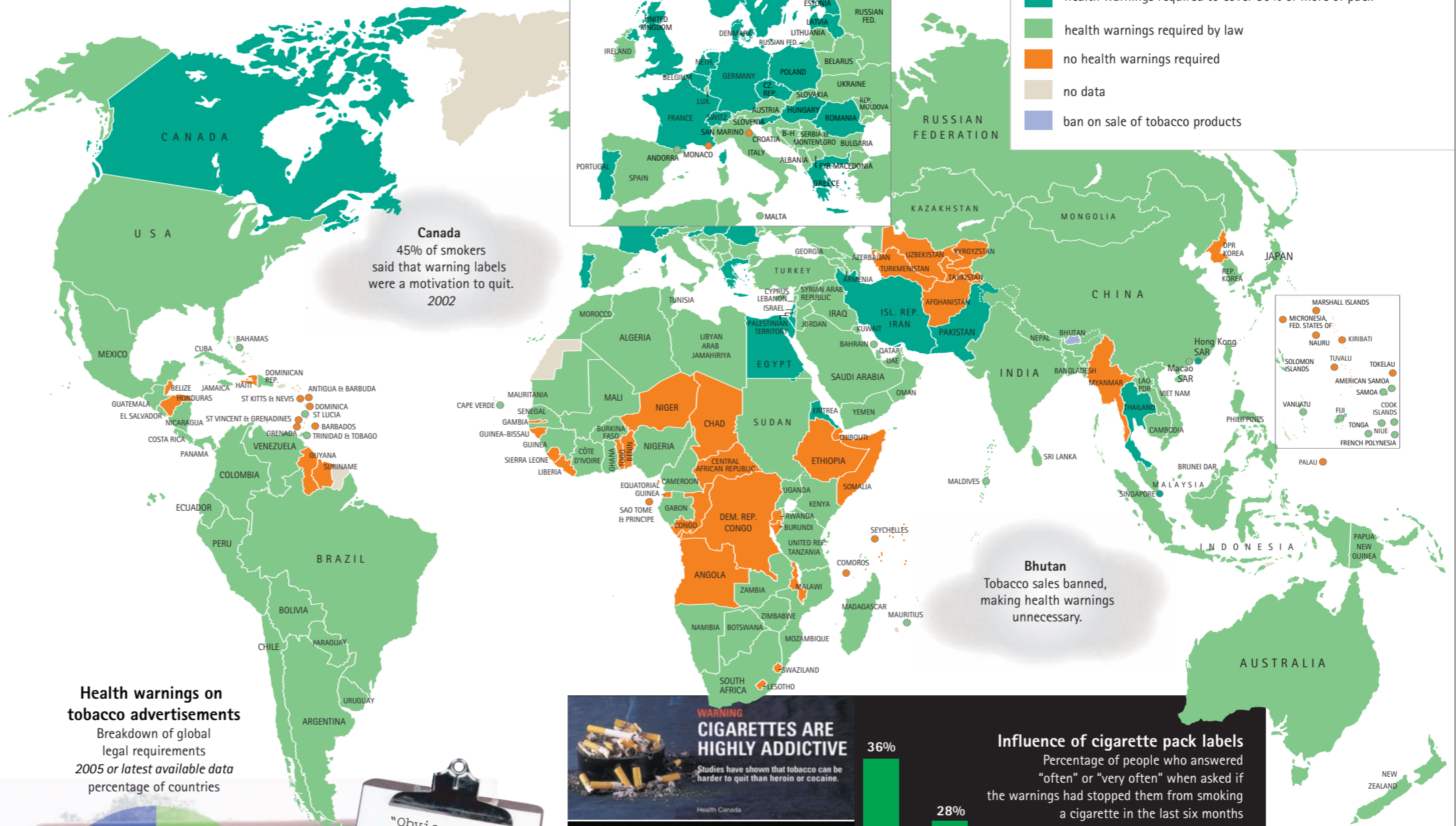
"Plain packaging is important because it eliminates the positive imagery associated with the brand and potentially disrupts the process of smoking initiation whereby child smokers become brand loyal."
 Rob Cunningham and Ken Kyle, 1995
 Canadian Cancer Society

Since the 1960s, health warnings on cigarette packs have been used as a way to communicate risks associated with smoking. Warnings are now required in the majority of countries around the world and increasingly creative methods are being used to present these messages.

Cigarette packs in Brazil display graphic images, along with a phone number to a support centre for smokers wishing to quit. Australia's packs include cessation tips. The European Union is also encouraging member countries to use graphic health warnings, which have proven highly effective.

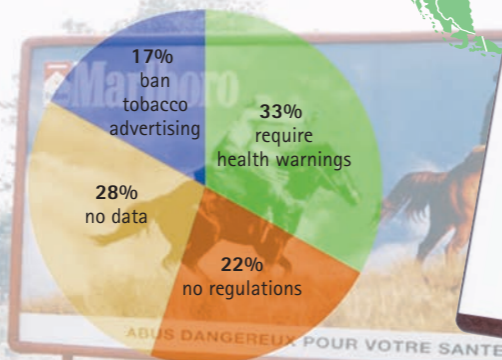
In order to be effective, warning labels should be regulated for size, content and design. Reports from Canada and Australia also suggest that plain packaging, displaying only the brand name and the health warning with no use of colour, logo, or graphic design, may increase both prominence and believability of health warnings. These health warnings should be extended to all forms of tobacco, including non-cigarette tobacco products.

In one of its strongest provisions, Article 11 of the WHO FCTC requires that tobacco product health warnings cover at least 30 percent, and preferably 50 percent, of the visible area on a cigarette pack. Misleading words implying a reduced health risk, such as "light" or "mild", are also banned.



Health warnings on tobacco advertisements

Breakdown of global legal requirements
 2005 or latest available data
 percentage of countries



"Obviously the Group policy should be to avoid health warnings on all tobacco products for just as long as we can."
 Stewart Lockhart,
 British American Tobacco (BAT) UK director, 1978

